Joint Meeting Notes
North Delta Agency Team/North Delta Improvements Group
May 1, 2003

The following provides a summary of the joint North Delta Agency Team/North Delta Improvements Group meeting held on May 1, 2003. Future NDAT/NDIG meetings will be **temporarily postponed** until progress is made on developing the hydrology and screening criteria for the project.

Attendees:

Gwen Knittweis – DWR	Collette Zemitis – DWR
Sara Martin – J&S	Jeannie Blakeslee – DOC/DCRP
Walt Hoppe - Point Pleasant	Ryan Olah – USFWS
Robert Clark – NDWA	Mike Eaton – TNC
Don Trieu – MBK	Roger Lee – DWR
Patricia Fernandez – CALFED	Monica Martin – DWR
Chuck Vogelsang – CALFED	Margit Aramburu – DPC
Dan Gwaltney – Sac County	Daniel Wilson – DPC
Gil Labrie	Jeff Stuart – NOAA Fisheries
Bill Dutton – USBR	Steve Cowdin – DWR
Sam Garcia – J&S	Aimee Dour-Smith – J&S
April Zohn – J&S	Topper Van Loben Sels – DPC/NDWA

Members Invited but not Present:

Shanna Draheim – EPA	Rosalie Del Rosario – NOAA Fisheries
Evelyne Gulli – SLC	Frank Wernette – DFG
Dennis O'Bryant - DOC	Shelby McCoy - RWQCB
John Thomson – USFWS	Doug Morrison – USFWS
Diane Windham – NMFS	Terry Mills – CALFED
Steve Shaffer – CDFA	Pete Rabbon – DWR/Rec Board
Rod Johnson – CALFED	Rebecca Wren – USACE
Craig Stevens – J&S	Jim Starr – DFG
Kathy Dadey – EPA	Matthew Reischman - CVRWQCB
Marina Brand – DFG	Mike Jewel – USACE
Mike Finan – USACE	Scott Cantrell – DFG
Bellory Fong – CALFED	Grant Kreinberg - SAFCA
Curt Schmutte – DWR	Mike Aceituno – NOAA Fisheries
Ron Ott – CALFED	Brad Burkholder – DFG
Paul Bowers – USACE	Craig Crouch – Sac County
Ken Trott – USDA	Suzanne DeLeon – DFG

Handouts: Draft Project Alternatives Screening Criteria
North Delta Public Scoping Report
Peer Review of HEC-RAS Hydraulic Model
Optimization Study Power Point Presentation Slides

Notes:

I. Project Update. Gwen Knittweis provided the following updated North Delta Information:

a. **HEC-RAS Hydraulic Model Peer Review Report.** Gwen provided a copy of peer review report for the hydraulic model prepared by MBK engineers. In summary, the peer review panel concluded that the model was appropriate for it's given application, that it was properly configured and able to represent flooding condition in the North Delta region, and that calibration to the January 1997 flood event was reasonable. A copy of the report can be found at http://www.mcwatershed.org/NorthDelta/about.html.

b. **Public Scoping Report**. Gwen also provided a copy of the public scoping report prepared to document the written and verbal comments from the two public meetings held in February. A copy of the public scoping report can be found at http://www.mcwatershed.org/NorthDelta/about.html.

c. **Project Schedule**. There are two critical paths governing the project schedule right now. The first includes determining what hydrology is appropriate to use for the model, and the second involves addressing uncertainties such as sediment dynamic processes to make project alternatives scientifically sound. DWR is currently trying to complete the contracting process with a hydrology consultant, processing contracts to address science uncertainties, and is working with the CALFED science board to determine the appropriate science requirements. DWR is hoping to have project alternatives developed by September 2003 and a draft EIR/EIS released by December 2003.

II. Optimization Study Overivew

Steve Cowdin of DWR gave a presentation on what process DWR will go through to complete an optimization study for the North Delta Project. In summary, DWR completes flood damage analysis to estimate and compare impacts to a given area both with, and without, any given project. The actual analysis results in two key deliverables: (1) statistics on how well the project performed and (2) a number estimating annual damage. These outputs are then used to compute reductions in expected annual damage, and to compare these reductions (benefits) with project costs. Initiation of the optimization study for North Delta will begin when the hydrology, hydraulics, and flood plains have been defined.

Key points that were made during the presentation included:

- Statistics that are generated specific to project performance are for a defined "impact area", versus the entire project area. Impact areas are defined by flooding and land use characteristics, and may, for the North Delta, be defined by islands, or parts of islands if they are divided by levees. For North Delta, we will be using the 200-year flood plain.

- To assess the annual damage to an impact area, DWR will define both urban and crop damage categories. Potential urban categories include: single and multi-family residential properties, mobile homes; commercial areas; industrial areas; public services; farmsteads; automobiles; and emergency response. Potential crop categories include: fruit and nut; field; pasture and alfalfa; rice; truck; and vine. Information specific to each of these different categories is collected from digitized parcel maps, GIS databases, and digitized land use files and used to "assess" the value of resources in each category. This information then provides DWR with a baseline for comparing impacts with and without project alternatives.

  DWR is currently working with land owners to confirm the crop information in their land use files. All inventories will account for crops contained in silos

- There are three critical structural flood damage factors that are used to assess structural damage: extent, frequency, and depth. Similarly, there are 5 critical crop damage factors used to assess damage to crops: extent, frequency, season, duration, and depth. The North Delta project will be using the 5, 10, 50, 100, and 200-year events to determine floodplain parcel/crop depth, which, in turn, will be linked to USACE flood damage curves and crop stage-damage curves.

- It was noted that the optimization study doesn't appear to take into account "environmental damages", i.e., habitat values, water quality, etc. Steve said that those types of damages can be quantitatively put into the optimization study to allow for an economic cost/benefit analysis that reflects all values in the Delta, provided he has baseline data to do it. He also explained two USACE terms: National Economic Development (NED) Analysis and National Ecosystem Restoration (NER) Analysis. Although the NED allows USACE to assign a monetary value for certain impacts, the NER, which deals with impacts to ecosystems, only provides qualitative information. For the North Delta Project, USACE will do the required NED/NER analysis, but DWR may develop a supplemental method for assigning dollar values to ecosystem components.

- Steve pointed out that stakeholders and agency members will have a chance to review the information provided in the optimization study to preliminarily determine if it "makes sense"

III. Draft North Delta Screening Criteria

Gwen reviewed DWR's draft proposal for screening criteria for North Delta. In summary, DWR is proposing to use a two tier screening process to screen project alternatives for inclusion in the EIR/EIS. The first screen would be focused on whether or not a project alternative meets the purpose and need (flood control and ecosystem restoration) of the proposed project. The second screen, which includes an extensive series of questions, would be used to determine if the project is affordable, equitable, implementable, durable, complete, effective, efficient, and acceptable. The second level screen would

be designed to better incorporate agricultural, land use, water quality and recreation goals and objectives for the project, and would be systematically applied. The second level screen may be expanded to additional levels if screening.

During the brainstorming session that followed, several comments were made:

- The screening criteria need to reflect all of the requirements of the CALFED ROD, including conveyance, water quality, and levee improvements/integrity. They should also emphasize wildlife friendly agriculture.

- Monitoring and adaptive management need to be emphasized for both flood control and ecosystem elements. Need to make sure that there is funding in place to respond to both.

- Need to design the screening criteria to emphasize longevity, with minimum maintenance. We want to minimize the long term project costs, but not necessarily choose the "least expensive" up front alternative.

- We need to make sure that the screening criteria take into account Williamson Act contracts

- It was recommended that the second level screening criteria be weighted, and possibly divided into a third level tier. This would allow more emphasis to be placed on criteria that would be "show stoppers" (i.e., not technically feasible), versus criteria that emphasize important elements, but not necessarily elements that should eliminate a particular alternative from the EIR/EIS.

Comments on the draft screening criteria are due to Gwen by May 15, 2003. Please contact her at gwenk@water.ca.gov or 916/651-7015 for a copy of the draft screening criteria if you haven't already received one.

Action Items:

1. NDAT/NDIG members will provide comments on the draft screening criteria to Gwen by May 15, 2003.